

COUNTY GUIDELINES

***"The most urgent task at hand is to build
from a hundred cultures, one culture which
does what no other culture has done
before...gives a place to every human gift.
Margaret Mead***

**WASHINGTON STATE
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
DIVISION OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
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COUNTY GUIDELINES TASK FORCE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE NUMBER

INTRODUCTION	4
DEFINITION OF BENEFITS	7
Power And Choice	7
Relationships	8
Status/Contribution	9
Integration	10
Competence	11
Health And Safety	12
PURPOSE	13
STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING BENEFITS	15
1. Role of County Board\Staff	15
•Quality Indicators	16
•Strategies	16
•Review	18
2. Role of Employment	20
•Quality Indicators	20
•Strategies	21
•Review	22
3. Role of Children's Service	24
•Quality Indicators	24
•Strategies	25
•Review	25
4. Role of Community Access	27
•Quality Indicators	27
•Strategies	28
•Review	28
5. Role of Community Infra-Structure	30
•Quality Indicators	30
•Strategies	31
•Review	31
6. Role of Local Communities	34
•Quality Indicators	34
•Strategies	34
•Review	35
CONCLUSION	37

INTRODUCTION

The decision of many families to raise their sons and daughters with disabilities at home rather than request a place for them in state facilities, together with the State's decision to return people living in institutions to their communities, has resulted in many people with disabilities living and working in communities all over Washington. They are contributing much to the economy, diversity, and enrichment of the communities in which they live. While on the surface it would appear great strides have been made in supporting the presence of individuals with disabilities in local neighborhoods and communities, the truth is that few of these individuals have solid, reciprocal connections and support networks. Many of these individuals are in fact more like visitors to communities than true community members.

Supporting people with disabilities to be a part of their community was never intended to be the role of the "service systems." Protection rather than connections was the focus. We have come a long way since the establishment of those first services on behalf of people with disabilities. The "special" services that were created for people living at home as well as those living in State facilities were designed to get people "ready" to live and work in their community. These experiences have taught us that when people are separated through services we systematically exclude individuals with developmental disabilities from their community. This exclusion denies people with disabilities as well as community members the opportunity to know and care for each other.

"...The problem arises when services take over the life of someone they're supposed to be supporting. When this happens, people and their families lose the freedom to control their lives - even lose the basic belief in their ability to do so. They also lose the relationships with other human beings that are basic building blocks of life. Instead they become surrounded by people who are paid to be with them, to organize, manage, direct and oversee their lives. At that point the social service system assumes a measure of control that most of the rest of us would find intolerable and it isolates them from other people outside the system, from the community..." (taken from The Gift of Hospitality, by Mary O'Connell, 1988)

In Washington State alone, there are currently over 2,000 people eligible for support services from the Department of Social and Health Services Division of Developmental Disabilities but who receive no or limited state services. These individuals make up the growing numbers of people considered "unserved" in the community. Efforts to include people with disabilities into community life as well as efforts to eliminate the list of people waiting for opportunities will require a major shift in the way we think about the issue. This is not just a issue for people with developmental disabilities, their families, and social service industry professionals. This is a community issue requiring community solutions. Just doing more of the same will not get us there. It seems that when we create unnatural environments for people with developmental disabilities we further separate and segregate people from community citizens and the natural, typical places

The following are the basic interdependent benefits of quality living that form the core of the County Guidelines. These are the same benefits that drive and direct residential services in Washington state.

- **Power and Choice** - Making our own choices and directing our own lives.
- **Relationships** - Having people in our lives whom we love and care about and who love and care about us.
- **Status/Contribution** - Feeling good about ourselves and having others recognize us for what we contribute to others and our community.
- **Integration** - Being a part of our community, through active involvement. This means doing things we enjoy as well as new and interesting things.
- **Competence** - Learning to do things on our own or be supported to do things for ourselves.
- **Health and Safety** - Feeling safe and secure, and being healthy.

The importance of these basic benefits of community life are not unique to people with developmental disabilities nor are they unique to residential services. They are important to all of us in all phases of our lives.

DEFINITION OF BENEFITS

Power and Choice

Power and choice is each person having maximum control over his/her own destiny. Experiencing power, control, and ownership of our personal affairs are essential elements that help us gain autonomy, be self-governing, and pursue our own interests and goals. Power is control, influence and authority over oneself and others. Choice is the power, right or liberty to select from among several options.

Supports should be offered in ways that provide encouragement to grow and develop. Positive action needs to be taken by individuals offering support in ways that promote the dignity, privacy, legal rights, autonomy and individuality of each person receiving support.

Some examples of things that promote individual power and choice are opportunities to:

- Express our own unique preferences.
- Identify what we want and know how to get it.
- Take risks in pursuit of our own important objectives.
- Engage and involve others for support and encouragement.
- Develop skills and competencies.
- Have financial security.
- Participate in leadership roles.
- Have dignity, privacy and legal rights.
- Exercise individuality which is based on personal preferences, choices and back-up when needed.
- Be included as members of organizations based on interest.
- Spend time with people we care about and who care about us.
- Have options and opportunities regarding work, recreation, relationships, etc.
- Have respect for our cultural ties.

Status/Contribution

Status is valued perception by self and others. Such positive recognition is important to all people and is influenced by factors such as where we work and live; our role as a community member; managing daily activities; our personal appearance and style; managing money; learning a job; making a purchase; meeting new people; maintaining personal relationships; pursuing personal interests, etc.

The way that supports are offered affect a person's status, reputation, and positive recognition by influencing the way we see ourselves and/or the way others see us. Support should be offered in ways that promote individual status, respect and credibility as well as in ways that are typical to other community citizens.

Some examples of things that promote status are:

- Opportunities for valued roles such as co-worker, student, customer, and taxpayer.
- Membership and participation in clubs and organizations.
- Recognition of competencies, talents and gifts.
- Friendships and reciprocal relationships i.e., good neighbor, volunteer, good friend, son/daughter/sister/brother.
- Participation in decision making roles such as voter, jury duty, board member, etc..
- Respect for the contribution each person can make.
- Financial resources.
- Participation in community activities i.e., ballet, opera, theater, sporting events, bingo, movies, bird watching, cultural activities, etc.
- Ownership of home and material possessions, i.e., television, VCR, CD player, furniture, etc.
- Attire that is fashionable and attractive.
- Control over decisions that affect our lives.
- Looking and feeling good!

Competence

Competence is the capacity to do what you need and want to do. There are two ways to be competent. You may be self-reliant and able to do things for yourself and/or have the power to identify and obtain the help you need from others.

Sometimes people with developmental disabilities may need support to do what they need and want to do. This may mean assistance for people to learn the things they need to know to be self-reliant. Whenever possible, the assistance should be provided in natural, typical ways by people most closely involved with the activity being learned.

Some examples of things that promote competence are:

- Opportunities to work in the community.
- Identifying needed and desired supports.
- Learning things of interest which are chosen by the person and are relevant to everyday life.
- Support, if necessary, from paid as well as non-paid people.
- Opportunities to take reasonable risks.
- Availability of back-up help when needed.
- Opportunities to use the skills learned, including skills of defining, negotiating, and directing the help they need.
- Activities or adapting activities in environments that are important to the person and relevant to the activities

PURPOSE

These guidelines provide a vision for promoting the inclusion of people with disabilities into community life and establishing a framework for partnerships between citizens with disabilities and their families, the State, counties and local communities. The guidelines also provide a foundation for the planning each county is required to do as part of its state contract. Finally, the guidelines provide strategies for using state and local dedicated funds and personal influence to achieve the desired benefits. The six benefits described in the County Guidelines are currently being implemented in residential services throughout Washington state and represent a holistic approach to providing supports that build on individual interests, gifts and preferences.

"Picture a world where people with all types of labels are truly connected with people who do not have labels. Visualize and dream about a world that is not overregulated, overprofessionalized, overserviced and overbuilt."

Colleen Wieck and Jeff Strully

The guidelines also represent a change in how services/supports are determined, developed and provided. Previous guidelines have described the services that counties could purchase, suggested an approach to developing such services and advocated for a process of evaluating contracted services. They focused on the county's responsibility for employment, community access and children's services. While these services continue to be important in the state and county contracting process, the developing, purchasing and evaluating of segregated services for people with disabilities will not achieve the benefits of community inclusion. Services and programs can no longer be designed exclusively for people with developmental disabilities. Supports must be designed in ways that include communities. Supports need to be tailored to individuals in a manner that will encourage cultural connections, community participation in promoting choices, opportunities and experiences in communities.

These guidelines further recognize the important and pioneering contribution that people with disabilities and their families make in guiding counties to the community and acknowledge that we have underrated people's desire for common experiences and the willingness and hospitality of the community to include them. The county role now seems to be one that supports both the individual and the community's relationships, rather than substituting natural experiences with segregated services. While communities vary greatly throughout Washington and have different capacities to support the inclusion of community members with diverse interests and needs, the fact is all people, regardless of their situation, belong to their community and to the citizens of that community, and their communities belong to them.

With a growing number of people considered "unserved," it is critical that counties begin looking at different ways of offering support and assistance and including communities in finding solutions. Counties, as local planning bodies, are in the position to begin identifying "who" needs to come together to address this issue and to determine plans for alleviating the injustices being experienced by many people who find themselves in this situation.

This document is not intended to explain contractual requirements. It's not a detailed guide to the development of community services nor is it a cookbook for designing service evaluation tools. Rather, it lays out a vision and philosophical framework for promoting the full inclusion of all people into the community. There is no one "roadmap" to implementing these benefits.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVING BENEFITS AND QUALITY REVIEW

*True integration will be achieved by
true neighbors who are willingly
obedient to unenforceable obligations.*

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Overview

Over the years, the primary responsibility of county boards has been to work in partnership with the Division of Developmental Disabilities to identify individual's needs and to administer state funds and purchase services to enhance the lives of local citizens with developmental disabilities. As leaders, county boards are in a powerful position to determine, develop, influence and assess the way communities include all citizens into community life. This includes listening to people with disabilities and their allies; using county and State funds in ways that promote community participation; involving community members and leaders in owning the solution; and influencing and promoting valued, accessible and integrated opportunities for all community members.

The following are areas that impact the integration of individuals into community life. How counties support, define, and promote opportunities will determine how effective counties will be in achieving the benefits of relationships, power and choice, status, integration, competence; and health and safety on behalf of all citizens in your communities.

Under each area there are outcomes/quality indicators, strategies, and review questions that County boards may want to ask themselves and others to determine whether the benefits are being experienced. These outcomes/quality indicators and review questions could form the foundation for the evaluation/review process that each county will need to do. This review process is two fold, the first is a way to determine how service providers are doing in supporting people to experience the benefits described and the second is for counties to have a way to self-assess their effectiveness in contracting, influencing, and supporting the benefits on behalf of individuals with developmental disabilities living in the community.

(1) ROLE OF COUNTY BOARD/STAFF

Overview

Washington's Laws and Administrative Codes (RCW 71A.10 through 71A.22 and RCW 71A.14.50) recognize the authority and need of counties to appoint a local board to plan for persons with developmental disabilities. The law and codes even recommend that boards include representatives of public, private, or voluntary agencies, representatives of local governmental units, and citizens knowledgeable about developmental disabilities or

Strategies:

Planning is one of the primary responsibilities of local developmental disability boards. Clearly defined goals based on the organization's mission can provide the framework necessary to develop and ensure quality services. The following are some strategies for community planning:

- Clearly define the mission and basic objectives of the organization and build in opportunities to periodically re-evaluate and renew the mission and objectives.
- Define the activities needed to achieve the stated objectives.
- Identify existing strengths of current board members and match those to key activities.
- Include people with disabilities on the county advisory board.
- Solicit information from people with disabilities and their families.
- Keep public officials and community planners aware of board activity and evolving changes in services for people with disabilities, including the needs of people unserved.
- Continually work to find interested people to assist with meeting organizational objectives and provide the training necessary to make people effective.
- Let prospective board members know exactly what is expected of them in terms of time and responsibility.
- In every move, in every decision, in every policy, the board needs to start out by asking . . . Will this advance our mission?
- Engage in a planning process that gives organizational direction.
- Establish selection criteria and clearly state the role and responsibilities of board volunteers and staff.
- Evaluate contractors and establish policy based on the mission. Follow up on the results.
- Function openly so that each board member understands how the board plans and operates.
- Establish a clear understanding of the difference in roles between the board and paid staff.
- Establish and clearly state how board volunteers are recruited, appointed, oriented, trained, and performance monitored.

- Does each board member understand the mission of the organization and how that mission is achieved through its actions?
- Is the local community aware of the boards role and activities?
- Does the board collectively formulate specific goals to guide its work?
- Does the organization seek and use community input during its planning process?
- Is the mission clearly stated and written in a way that the general public understands the purpose of the county board?
- If the board is a multi-purpose board, what assurances are there that the interests of people with disabilities are well represented? Is there broad knowledge and expertise in the area of developmental disabilities represented on the board, which includes both people with disabilities, family members, and social service industry professionals?
- Is the county developing services based on objective information from the whole community rather than the special interest of a few?
- Is the board diverse in its make-up, i.e., are there people of color and with different ethnic backgrounds represented on the board?
- Is the board planning on behalf of all people with disabilities living in the community, including people who are unserved?
- Are people with disabilities benefiting from county support?
- Is there cooperation and collaboration between the County and the local Field Services office?

- Increased wages.
- Opportunities for new employment.

- Choices for individuals in:
 - the work they do.
 - who provides the support.
 - location of the job.
 - hours worked.
- Opportunities for relationships and support from co-workers who are not labeled disabled.
- Supports that provide culturally competent services to individuals and their families, and demonstrate a value for diversity.
- Opportunities for everyone that wants a job to have a job.

Strategies:

Rather than establish guidelines and standards for each type of employment service, this section will provide strategies and quality guides with a focus on meeting the support needs of employers as well as the individual support needs of citizens with disabilities.

- Establish a philosophy and mission statement that reflects the perspective that people with disabilities have a right to integrated community jobs.
- Ask people with disabilities what they want and plan around their interests.
- Actively seek information and encourage participation from families, employers and community members.
- Develop flexible contracting policies and procedures that encourage community employment and employer involvement in the training and support of individuals.
- Make consistent investments that support your mission based on the County Guidelines. Use new money to meet that mission and plan for the transition of employment services and resources to supporting people in individual jobs.
- Evaluate financial policies to determine if procedures encourage the use of a variety of community resources and funding agencies to support people in their jobs.
- Review processes to determine if contracted services promote the development of supports based on individual need.
- Develop training seminars and forums to share information with families, schools and community members.

- How are minority owned businesses including people with disabilities in their companies?
- Does the employment service support people in regular jobs where most of the co-workers are not labeled as disabled?
- Does the employment service offer individual choice with regard to job selection, support structure and job location?
- Does the employment service make vocational decisions based on the strengths, capacities, skills and preferences of the individual?
- Does the employment service seek and encourage employer participation in the process of developing jobs and individualized support strategies?
- Does the employment service seek and encourage co-worker involvement in the process of supporting individuals?
- Do existing policies and procedures promote innovation and the development of natural employment supports?
- Are existing policies and procedures consistent with the mission?
- Do policies and procedures foster and promote collaboration?
- Are community resources used to supplement state resources or are state resources seen to be the only available resource for supporting people in the community?
- Are people of color and other ethnic backgrounds included in the agency, both as staff as well as participants.
- Do employers and people with disabilities play a significant role in the decision making process with regard to employment services?
- Does the county have a process of eliciting input and feedback from a broad segment of the community?

- Families are recognized as competent.
- Support for the cultural and ethnic diversity of families and communities.

Strategies:

The following strategies are offered as a guide to defining service expectations:

- Include families in the planning of the children's services.
- Develop services that consider individual family interests, abilities, cultural and ethnic status, routines and preferences.
- Provide services that are culturally competent and demonstrate a value for diversity.
- Develop policies and procedures that promote the use of community resources and services typically available to other children.
- Maximize the use of other funding resources, i.e., E.P.S.D.T.(Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment), public schools, private insurance, CHAMPUS (military insurance), United Way, Elks, C.C.S. (Coordinated Children's Service), etc.
- Inform at the time of identification and on a regular basis, families of children with developmental disabilities of services available for their child and family.
- Enhance parent networking, support, training and family coping skills.
- Provide on-going training to staff working with children and families.
- Contract with specialists, therapists and private practitioners to provide services in generic day care centers and private homes.
- Reach out to people of color and other ethnic populations and take direction from them on how supports can be consistent with the beliefs and lifestyles of families.

Quality Review:

These questions are offered as a starting point to an overall review of service effectiveness.

- How does the service provider get to know the interests, capacities, ethnic background and preferences of the child and family?
- Is the family directing the ongoing decision making process of services for their son or daughter?
- Does the service provider have a knowledge of community resources and activities which are typically available to other children?

(4). ROLE OF COMMUNITY ACCESS

Overview

The purposes of community access services are to:

- Provide the support necessary to build and strengthen relationships between family members and members of the local community who are not paid to be with the person.
- Find places where an individual's interest, culture, talent, and gifts can be contributed and shared with others with similar interests.
- Provide opportunities for people to do things they enjoy as well as new and interesting things.
- Support participation in clubs, association and organizations as members and in decision making capacities.

When thinking of doing anything in the community, think small, think face to face.

John McKnight

Therefore, these services should focus on identifying individual interests and developing strategies to connect people based on mutual interests. People engaged in the delivery of these services should create and support opportunities that bring people together around mutual interests.

Encouraging people with disabilities to access local communities should be everyone's goal and responsibility. Providers responsible for employment, residential and community access services are in a unique position to offer the opportunities that can bring people together to explore things they have in common. Local county boards have a responsibility to plan and develop services that promote relationships among all community members.

While these services are typically offered to individuals who are not receiving employment services or who are unemployed, it is extremely important to understand that participation in these services does not imply that a person is unable to work or that people who work may not need support to be involved in their community.

Quality Indicators:

The following are some of the outcomes you would want to see for individuals receiving community access:

- Relationships with a variety of individuals.
- Reciprocal relationships with family members, friends and others in the community.
- Opportunities for a wide variety of activities, based on personal preferences. This includes opportunities to do new and interesting things.

- Bring people together to identify alternative ways of obtaining support and funding.

Quality Review:

The following questions are offered as a starting point to overall review of service effectiveness:

- How does the county encourage innovation through its contracting procedures?
- Does the county funding method promote the implementation of community access services that are individualized rather than group directed?
- Does the contracting process promote opportunities for relationships, both long term and casual association?
- How will people's lives be changed as a result of these services, i.e., will people have increased competence; will people's status be improved; will people have opportunities for more people in their life; will people have opportunities to do things they enjoy as well as new and interesting things, etc.?
- Do these services enhance the public image of the person with a disability?
- Do the supports offered teach the person to use the community and community resources with and without agency staff?
- Are these supports advocated for all people who need and want them, including people who are currently unserved?

- Medical Support that is:
 - available to all people.
 - affordable.
 - provided in competent and respectful ways.
- Public Education that:
 - integrates children and young adults with and without disabilities.
 - offers employment opportunities.
 - graduates students with a job.
 - supports children birth to three.
 - offers training at vocational technical schools, community colleges and universities.
 - focuses on capabilities.
 - supports families' competence.

Strategies:

The following are offered as initial strategies for influencing and directing the way local agencies plan for and support individuals with developmental disabilities:

- Learn about community services and ethnic organizations and share information about the needs of people with developmental disabilities.
- Include people who are knowledgeable about local services on the county advisory board.
- Work with specific agency decision makers and planners.
- Work to include and support people with disabilities on community decision making boards.
- Work with the local decision makers to develop a plan to meet the needs of people with disabilities through programs available to everyone.
- Inform those responsible for the development and delivery of local services of the specific needs of individuals with disabilities.
- Fund, if necessary, the supports that may be required for a person with a disability to participate.
- Advocate for the use of language that is dignified and respectful.

Quality Review:

These questions are offered as a starting point for a review of generic community services. In addition to questions related to generic services, county boards should ask themselves the following: (1) Is the board influencing the direction of generic services? and, (2) Are people with disabilities benefiting from this influence?

Recreation/Leisure

- Do people with disabilities participate in local events typically attended by other citizens from the community?
- Are special recreation events and activities created specifically for people with disabilities?
- Does participation in local recreation and leisure activities promote community integration and the development of relationships?
- Is physical accessibility a barrier to recreation and leisure activities?

Education

- Do school personnel participate in the planning of community services?
- Do local school districts encourage integration in the classrooms?
- Do educational services appear age appropriate?
- Do schools prepare students with disabilities for jobs in the community?
- Do students with disabilities graduate from school with a job?
- Are integrated adult education experiences available through technical schools, community colleges or other institutions?
- Has each local school district considered their option of including 0-3 year olds in the school district program?
- Has each local school district claimed available SPI (Superintendent of Public Instruction) funding for children birth to three?
- Do service providers and school personnel plan together with the family for educational needs of the child?

- Participate in information sharing forums with community organizations around issues of diversity, housing needs, etc., and use this time to educate community people on the talents and gifts that individuals with disabilities have to offer.
- Educate community leaders and members about the issues facing people with disabilities and their families. Include people with disabilities and their families in this education. This could include community forums.
- Invite community leaders and members to come together to share the responsibility and form a partnership to work on issues affecting the inclusion of people in the community.
- Work with advocacy organizations, such as People First, to share with community leaders and members their goals and dreams of what "community" should be for all people.
- Use the media to share stories of contributions that people with disabilities are making in their neighborhood and communities, i.e., employee, volunteer, good neighbor, etc.
- Be pro-active in electing county/city officials--shaping their platform. Influence elected officials through the political process and begin developing relationships with officials.
- Join groups working on community issues, (i.e., housing, transportation and poverty) and bring in perspectives for people with disabilities.
- Develop community groups/organizations, if none exist, around specific issues affecting inclusion of people into communities.
- Introduce individuals with disabilities to other individuals in the community.

Quality Review:

How will county boards know if community building strategies are actually benefiting individuals with disabilities and the communities they live in? The following are some suggested quality indicators counties might look for to determine whether their efforts were successful:

- Are people with disabilities being included in organizations, associations, clubs, churches, etc.?
- Are the issues affecting people with disabilities included on the agenda of neighborhood groups?
- Do people with disabilities have more relationships as a result of these new connections?
- Are stories being printed and told in local media that reflect positive contributions being made by people with disabilities?

CONCLUSION

Citizens of the state of Washington, through these Guidelines and Guidelines of the past, continue to demonstrate an ability to struggle with important questions and to work toward a vision of inclusion on behalf of all its citizens.

The benefits described in this document of:

- Power and Choice
- Relationships
- Status
- Integration
- Competence
- Health and Safety

will require that each of us do the following:

- Strive to build and support relationships.
- Utilize natural supports as much as possible.
- Stress community involvement.
- Support active participation.
- Use non-intrusive, natural interventions.
- Be sensitive to individual rights--particularly privacy, personal decision making, and personal space.
- Maintain natural routines.
- Be conscious of age appropriateness.
- Recognize the right of the person to make real choices.
- Maintain good health, safety, and medical practices.
- Utilize the power of modeling in your own behavior.
- Be conscious of subtle images, postures and language which can devalue people.
- Promote status, competencies, and personal growth.
- Know the individual well.
- Respect and support the cultural ties an individual may have.
- Keep people who are unemployed and underemployed in mind as decisions are made.

We have much work to do before our vision of total inclusion into community for all people will be realized. These Guidelines represent another step toward that goal and will require partnerships and collaboration on a level never before attempted.

"...this work must not be an extension of the formal system, but be located in the civic sector - the place where people come together as citizens - provides a broader perspective, access to people who are not functioning as paid professionals but as neighbors and citizens, and the fundamental condition of informality." (Community Building in Logan Square, Mary O'Connell, 1990)
